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- NEWS RELEASE -

SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ TO MOBILIZE ELECTION DAY RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS TO ASSIST TOWNS WITH NEW VOTING EQUIPMENT

AFTER A YEAR OF PREPARATIONS, TABLE IS SET FOR TOMORROW'S HISTORIC PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Hartford: One day before Connecticut holds its first primary elections using new optical scan voting machines, Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz, is announcing that she will deploy Election Day Rapid Response teams to towns across the state in order to assist local election officials with any potential questions or problems that arise.

“Our Election Day Rapid Response teams will be made up of experts on the state’s new voting equipment,” said Bysiewicz. “Having them out in the towns instead of behind their desks will allow us to immediately respond to questions and find solutions. I look forward to spearheading this effort, working with local election officials to ensure that all our hard work over the past year pays off and Connecticut is ready for 21st century voting.”

Primary elections will be held in 23 Connecticut cities and towns on September 11th and all municipalities will be using optical scan technology. The list of communities is as follows: Bridgeport, Bristol, Colchester, Cornwall, Cromwell, Derby, East Hartford, Griswold, Hamden,

Hampton, Hartford, Lebanon, Lisbon, Middlebury, New Britain, New Haven, Oxford, Plainville, Preston, Stratford, West Haven, Woodbury, and Woodstock.

In Connecticut, a number of towns have already used optical scan technology. Twenty-five (25) towns successfully used the optical scan machines in the November 2006 elections. In May of this year, 13 more towns or boroughs held their elections using the new voting machines. Then in July Secretary Bysiewicz banned the use of lever machines in Connecticut, requiring all remaining municipalities use optical scan technology for the September 11th primaries and all elections and referenda thereafter.

The deployment of Election Day Rapid Response teams is just one facet of the Secretary of the State's strategy to help local election officials with the transition and assist them in properly conducting their town's primary elections.

Public Awareness: Believing that the more voters know about the new voting machines before they enter the polling place the better, Secretary Bysiewicz's office embarked on an ambitious public awareness campaign which produced the following results:

- Informational newspapers inserts were produced for every community conducting a primary. All told, more than 250,000 bilingual inserts have been distributed in newspapers across the state.
- Optical scan pocket guides that explain how to use optical scan technology were mailed to more than 300,000 registered voters in communities with primary elections.
- During the last 14 months the Secretary of the State's office has conducted more than 140 voting machine demonstrations at libraries, senior centers, town halls, and community meetings across Connecticut.
- Eight hundred instructional videos showing how to use optical scan machines and the vote-by-phone system were distributed to all 169 municipalities.
- Secretary Bysiewicz taped public service announcements which have been broadcasted on radio and TV stations across the state.

Training: On July 31, 2007 the Secretary of the State's office began conducting mandatory optical scan voting machine training for poll workers, Registrars of Voters, moderators, and machine tenders from all towns which have not used the new technology in a previous election. In that time the Secretary of the State's office offered over 200 training sessions in more than 30 regional training centers across the state. As of September 9th more than 2,600 election workers – from 134 towns - have completed all required training.

Testing & Security: Over the course of the last few days the Secretary of the State's office has also communicated with the Registrars of Voters in all 23 towns to ensure that each has accurately tested and set their optical scan machines for Election Day. Connecticut law requires public pre-election testing of all memory cards and back ups in each town. In addition, the state has tight procedures in place regarding the physical custody of memory cards. Protocol requires the following:

- The University of Connecticut's Dept. of Engineering and Computer Science will assist the Secretary of the State's office with pre-election protocol and testing of the memory card, both before and after the election.
- The cards are shipped from the programming location in tamper evident packaging.

- Immediately upon receipt the programmed cards are put in a locked storage location, to which only the Registrars of Voters have keys.
- Cards remain in locked storage until removed, always by 2 election officials of different parties, for public pre election testing.
- At the conclusion of the public testing, 2 of the 4 cards for each polling place are sealed, by tamper evident number seals, into the 2 tabulators for each polling place and the tabulators are sealed in their cases, also by numbered tamper evident seals.
- All transportation is done under the supervision of either a police officer or 2 sworn election officials of different parties.
- On election morning the moderator & both assistant Registrars check and record the integrity & number of each seal at every polling place.

Hand-counts: Post election procedures are also in place to ensure all votes are counted accurately. All close races receive a mandatory 100% hand recount. Once a recount is called the hand count of the actual ballots marked by the voters produce the official results of the election. The machines, and any programming errors, no longer have any effect on the outcome.

Audit: The Connecticut General Assembly – initiated by Secretary Bysiewicz - just enacted one of the strictest audit statutes in the country, developed in close cooperation with the Computer Science Department at the University of Connecticut. Under state statute, a hand audit is required of 10% of all polling places in all election and primaries. This audit is the only one of its kind in New England and the sample is larger than the one currently being considered for national legislation by the US Congress.

Vote-by-phone: After successfully introducing vote-by-phone technology to Connecticut towns and cities in last year's general election, Secretary Bysiewicz wanted to ensure that voters with disabilities would be guaranteed use of the system for all future elections. At the Secretary's request, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal issued a formal opinion in June, supporting the Secretary's decision that all polling places must provide vote-by-phone systems so as to allow voters with disabilities the opportunity to vote independently and privately. The Secretary of the State's office subsequently produced instructional videos for the vote-by-phone system that can be played in every polling place in Connecticut. In addition, Secretary Bysiewicz worked with the National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and CRIS radio to alert members of the public that the vote-by-phone system would be available.

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